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# Litchfield's Legacy

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*The Young Antiquarian*

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# Litchfield's Legacy

*The Young Antiquarian*

PUBLISHED BY  
THE LITCHFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
1950

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L7

L57

FIRST PRINTING

1950

PRINTED BY  
THE ENQUIRER PRESS  
LITCHFIELD, CONNECTICUT

## *A Fabulous Museum*

A modest advertisement appearing in the Litchfield Enquirer, from June to October, informs the reader that he may visit the museum of the Litchfield Historical Society any week day from 2:30 to 5:30 P. M. and on Saturdays from 11 A. M. to 1 P. M. and 2:30 to 5:30 P. M. The privilege thus extended by the Society is prized. Several hundreds of persons take advantage of it every summer. These visitors, for the most part, are also visitors to Litchfield. They come to trace records of their ancestors or historical matters of an earlier day or because they are genuinely interested in the amazing collection of memorabilia and the tangible possessions of our forefathers. Usually, they are well rewarded for the museum is a storehouse of fact and fancy, of art and utility, of systematic record and occasionally of tragically incomplete annals.

Understandably, the number of Litchfield visitors is small. We of the town know that these treasures are there, although we may not know them intimately. We pass the building frequently and, almost as frequently, vow that we shall soon go in and look around. Seldom does one of us go in. Then it is because the Town Clerk or the State Librarian or the Enquirer has told us that only at the Litchfield Historical Society can we find the record or the information we may be seeking.

As well as one may know the Museum, there is always a surprise at every visit. Something is always being added. The new curator, Miss Charlotte M. Wiggin, through long association, was familiar with the Society's work before taking up her duties. "I knew", she says, "before I started here that there were good portraits, and that one could see churns and spinning wheels Deerfield and Plymouth would envy. As a child, I was impressed because this small museum had a lion's head, a mummy's hand and a boat hook from Venice. But I was totally unprepared for the wealth of material—clothes, miniatures, laces, books, manuscripts, newspapers, or for the remarkable Indian relics, or for the number and variety of the possessions."

As with Miss Wiggin, there will be for most of us amazement at the variety and number of the exhibits.

. . . . .

### *Old Canvases*

Every time I visit the Museum of the Litchfield Historical Society I relive the fascination of my first visit. Again I marvel that so small a treasure house can contain so much of art and history—and of nature. I become one with Goldsmith's English rustics and their amaze at the village school master as their "wonder grew, that one small head could hold all he knew."

A count and measurement of the aboriginal relics, clothing, coins, glass and household utensils would indicate there was no space for other articles and none, surely, for the 700-odd pictures, photographs and engravings. But they are there. The oils, alone, and some of them are of heroic size, are material for, and deserve, a separate exhibit.

Some of the canvases date from the 1780's. Others carry through the best and the not-so-good periods of 19th Century painting. Mediocre or good, an interest clings to every picture—portrait or landscape. On occasion, it is the subject: Hannah Harrison, granddaughter of Capt. Thomas Harrison who settled in Litchfield with his ten sons in 1739; Seth Beers, first attorney for "The Bank"; the old fire-eater, Col. Benjamin Tallmadge; the Earl portraits of Judge Canfield\* of Sharon and members of his family; Robert Nisbit's "Laurel"; sketch of Medicine Rock on Chestnut Hill; "Bend in the Pomperaug," painted by Countess Nadine Tolstoy; John Brown, the abolitionist "martyr"; Uriah Tracy and Judah Champion, both by Earl (in the 1790's); sketch for portrait of Judge Edward W. Seymour by Morse.

It is frequently the artist, who, as much as the picture, has our attention. The curator will tell of George F. Wright, for example. One of his canvases in this museum is a portrait of William Deming, Sr. Wright, whose work is remarkable for power, natural flesh tints and accuracy, flourished

in Hartford, although he was born in Washington, Connecticut, in 1828, and prepared for a classical education under Rev. Isaac Jones of Litchfield. His art studies included some years in Germany, under the court-painter of Baden, and a summer in Rome. A contemporary, Mr. H. W. French, said of him that "few men have possessed the genius and given the promise . . . . but his life has been one of varied experiences, in which, while he has done much masterly work, he has apparently failed to recognize his own talent."

Ralph Earl, or Earle, is, of course, the man that Litchfield gave to the world by rediscovery in 1935, the year of the Connecticut Tercentenary Celebration. The late Mr. William Sawitzky, authority on early American paintings, said that the 1935 exhibition here of seventeen portraits and a landscape was the largest collection of Earls brought together up to that time. It led to the Yale Gallery's representative display of his work and the "only one man show" ever accorded to Earl during all of the 134 years which had passed since his death.

The Museum has eleven of Earl's portraits and one landscape. It is conjectured that the landscape was painted at Sharon in 1796.

\*Two young daughters of Judge Canfield are in the portraits. The eldest grew up to become known as "The Rose of Sharon" and her little sister as "The Lily of the Valley." Rose later came to Litchfield as the wife of F. A. Tallmadge, son of Col. Tallmadge.

### . . . *The Case of the Skeleton in the Crystal*

My eye stumbled on an odd bit of crystal when I was in the Museum. It was in a corner of the glassed-in case which protects the ornaments our forefathers prized. The curator sensed my interest and kindly offered me the use of the hugest magnifying glass I've ever seen. It not only brought the crystal into focus but gave me a panoramic close-up of half the contents of the show case.

Pearls paraded before my startled eyes, and rubies, I dare say of great price. There was ivory from the Far East, turquoise from the Near East, gold and silver from the Americas and semi-precious stones from around the world.

It was entertaining to move the magnifier over the case but I soon returned to the crystal and my interest increased as the glass disclosed a tiny golden skeleton embedded in this crystal coffin. The coffin is mounted on a gold hoop, the whole forming a finger ring. It is a mourning ring, dating from 1766. Two tiny crystals complete the mounting and placed as they are at the ends of the larger crystal appear to serve as head and foot-stones for the miniature relic.

Information, at least from immediately available records, about the ring and the jeweler's case which contains it, is meager. The ring was given to the Litchfield Historical Society by the late Miss Elizabeth White and was made and obviously worn in memory of "W. Gardiner who died in 1766 aged 24." There is no more about the young man who was mourned and nothing about the artisan who conceived and manufactured the golden hoop and the crystal coffin.

Other mourning ornaments are in the exhibit—rings, brooches, lockets, fans, crosses and wisps of hair preserved in many forms—but there are also many less gloomy souvenirs. You may see a half-inch piece of the Atlantic cable, cut in 1857 by Lieutenant J. G. North. On a nearby tray you may see a silver pipe, about the size and shape of a broken-stem clay pipe. When this was filled with tobacco and well lighted, it must have generated as much heat as the under side of an electric ironer. The pipe belonged to Peter Sherman, who was born in Newtown and died at Litchfield in 1821. When Peter was sixty, he decided to learn to smoke tobacco. He had the silver pipe made. "After various attempts he died without learning to smoke".

The next time you are in the Museum ask about the "remarkable Portuguese woman" and her ring. All I can tell you is that she married a Portuguese pirate who had taken her prisoner. He was captured and executed in Buenos Aires. She gave the ring to Mrs. Ashur Canfield who had befriended her.

Shades of Robert Louis Stevenson and Rafael Sabatini, can't you see her up in the rigging scanning the Spanish Main for the tall sails of the Plate Fleet.

. . . . . *Peevish, Homesick or Impolite*

"You must suppress all emotions of anger, fretfulness and discontent," Miss Sally Pierce told her young ladies of the Litchfield Female Academy in 1826. Thirty-four years of teaching, even in those puritanically flavored 1790's and early 1800's, had convinced her that man (and especially young ladies) must live by a code.

The young ladies probably didn't suppress all of the frowned-on of the common emotions, and records show us that they did not live up to all the twenty-three rules set down to guide their behavior.

But Miss Sally, pioneer as she was in giving women an opportunity to absorb higher learning, was also determined that her girls would not be deficient in the social graces. Many of them "lived away" from the Academy, boarding with residents of the town, but Academy rules followed them from sunup to bedtime.

"You must" was the dictum "consider it a breach of politeness to be requested a second time to rise in the morning or retire of an evening."

The rules (a copy is on exhibit in the Historical Society Museum—Hanging Case 6) frequently were combined with admonitions and sometimes with unflattering descriptions of the character of the violator. The young lady late to the table and thus missing grace showed "a cold heart destitute of gratitude to the author of all good."

Miss Pierce wasn't in favor of tale bearing and scandal. They are, she said "odious vices and must be avoided." A glint of humor must have been in her wise old eye when she evolved a companion rule on tales told about school-fellows to teachers which "must not be from malice, but from a sincere desire for their reformation." (125 students, 125 reformers?)

The girls could not: Go buggy riding till they were more than 16; talk loud or laugh in the street; walk for pleasure after 9 o'clock in the evening; tell a falsehood,

"though it might seem more advantageous"; wear party dresses to school. The rules were strict about attendance at public worship and there could be "no sloth, frivolous conversation or light reading on the Sabbath."

Rules or no rules, the girls could, and did, have a good time as letters on file at the Museum attest. They did go to public balls and on sleigh parties; they found ways to meet the young men of Mr. Tapping Reeves' Law School down on South Street. They profited by the social graces Miss Sally had instilled, for a goodly number of the law students married Academy girls. On occasion, the engagements and marriages practically emptied the Academy. This was so in 1830 when young Cornelius Du Bois, student of law, was writing to his friend Edgar S. Van Winkle that:

"Litchfield appears to be a very pleasant place and I think I shall like it well. I attended an evening or two ago an exhibition of the young ladies Seminary at this place of which you spoke in your letter. There were several handsome and interesting young demoiselles. The court room in which it was held was excessively crowded, and two or three fainted, one young lady on receiving her premium. I understand from Mrs. Reeves that all the marriageable young ladies have been married off, and there is at present nothing but young fry in the town, consequently that it will not be as gay as usual. The young ladies, she tells me, all marry law students, but as it will take two or three years for the young crop to become fit for the harvest, you need apprehend no danger of my throwing up my bacheliorship."

*Your young antiquarian has received from Raymond Loring, information manager for the Southern New England Telephone Company, a picture of Litchfield Center (circa 1850). It was found by Mr. W. W. Wren, of the same company, on an expedition into his attic. Perhaps the Enquirer will reproduce it one day and then I shall turn the original over to the Museum, as a contribution from Mr. Wren.*

#### • . . . G. Washington Writes a Letter

My usual mental picture of General Washington is of a stately figure, always calm and placid, and left unruffled by the circumstances and excitements disturbing to lesser mortals. Certainly there are few instances of record of the noble old general losing his poise.

But there are in existence intimate papers and memoranda indicating that General Washington could be hurt and discouraged. There is also ample proof, that when he

wanted something for his men he went after it in every way available. The spring of 1780, for example: the Army had wintered at Morristown and food was scarce. The General appealed right and left. One of his messengers went to Governor Jonathan Trumbull at Hartford. One of his letters went to Colonel Henry Champion, Commissary General.

Colonel Champion was a Connecticut man and a replica of the letter has been preserved for us by his descendants. It is now in the Museum, gift of Miss Clarissa Champion Deming. The document, through the years, has been folded, handled and admired and was a bit difficult to decipher for the inexperienced eye of this writer. Even so, the meaning of the message is startlingly clear.

Head Qr May the 26, 1780

Dear Sir;

We are in a situation of extremity for want of meat. The Troops on several days have been entirely destitute of any—and for a considerable time past—they have been at best at half—at quarter—at an Eighth allowance of their essential (*here a word is obscure.*) This distress produced a mutiny last night in the Connecticut line. I entreat your best and every exertion to give us relief.

I am Dear Sir, with great regard  
Yr Most Obed Servant  
G. Washington

Colo. Henry Champion

General Washington got his supplies. Governor Trumbull organized a train and sent along, among other things, 200 barrels of flour, 100 barrels of beef and 100 of pork. The train passed through Litchfield where they obtained additional supplies. Kilbourne's History of Litchfield adds: "Accompanying the train, Colonel Henry Champion had a drove of cattle which were tolled across the Hudson by the side of small boats. Col. Champion was father of the Rev. Judah Champion and Mrs. Julius Deming, and the grandfather of Mrs. Asa Bacon, all of this town."

When you are in to see the letter, the curator will show you a string of gold beads once owned by Dorothy Champion (Mrs. Julius Deming). There is a nice bit of tradition with them. Colonel Champion owned two bulls "Buck and Bright" which were taken to market. If they brought more than a

certain amount, Dorothy was to get a string of gold beads. They did and she did. Miss Marion Crutch presented the beads to the Historical Society from Mrs. W. W. Rockhill, great granddaughter of Dorothy Champion.

• • • • • **Treasure Chest**

Some twenty odd years ago a heavy iron chest was sent to the Museum by Mrs. W. W. Rockhill. The chest and its contents were given to the Historical Society. They came in an era when gifts to the Society were numerous and acquisitions frequent. With all the work there was to do in this small museum, the chest was put aside and its contents became something to "look over some day."

Recently, a few weeks after her appointment as curator, Miss Charlotte Wiggin gave the safe-like chest an admiring glance as a possible depository for a number of the rare books the Museum owns. The next day she resurrected the great key which was labelled as the open sesame of the iron box. With the help of a locksmith, she decoded the elaborate but simple combination—one of those our forebears delighted to arrange as a precaution against 17th and 18th Century cracksmen. The key itself has a false nub which must be removed before inserting in the lock. The lock is hidden under a spring plate and can be lifted only by pushing a certain knob in the proper direction.

Miss Wiggin prepared the key, pushed the knob, shot the bolt and, as a better writer of mysteries might say, there before her astonished eyes were five money bags, the topmost marked DOUBLOONS.

Well! There were not only golden doubloons in the treasure chest, there were Pieces of Eight and sovereigns and shillings and skillings and Louis d'Or and 200 other coins, minted by eleven countries from 1721 to 1840. If ever there was one, it was a find.

The chest, probably, was once the property of Julius Deming, great grandfather of Mrs. Rockhill. Mr. Deming was a partner, with Oliver Wolcott and Benjamin Tallmadge,

in the Litchfield China Trading Company. This business flourished for sometime and the fact that its headquarters were some sixty miles from salt water appeared to be little of a handicap. For want of a better available export, the company shipped "Pillar Dollars" or Pieces of Eight to China and "brought back the usual products of that Empire."

The dollars were milled in great numbers by various Spanish kings and trading made them the chief medium of exchange throughout the Orient. Silver pieces still are the most popular with the far eastern peasantry. The Pillar dollars took their name from the Pillars of Hercules engraved upon them. Spanish Main pirates and Stevenson in "Treasure Island" added to their fame with the nickname, "Pieces of Eight".

Mr. Sydney P. Noe, chief curator of the American Numismatic Society, after valuing, or evaluating, or whatever numismatists do to find out how much coins are worth, urged that they be put on exhibition. In a letter to Miss Wiffin, he said:

"We consider it highly desirable to have informative exhibitions of coins in such institutions as your own because out-of-town visitors are more likely to be at leisure than when they are home, and the possibility of their learning something is consequently the greater."

The chest also had other articles cached in it these many years: Silver hand-made buttons from a suit a proud young man wore at his wedding; hand-made common pins; documents and memoranda of members of the Deming family; watches and jewelry and many of the little things made to brighten the lives of a stricter generation.

### . . . . .      *Sold For Theft*

In the drowsy old year of 1762, the Second of the Reign of His gracious Majesty George III, malefactors were not treated leniently in the Connecticut Colony's County of Litchfield. A well-documented instance of severity is the case of Nathaniel Chapell.

Nathaniel was a transient of no known abode who hied himself up to Canaan and Sharon and did some pilfering.

He wasn't a skillful thief, apparently, for he was caught in the act and promptly haled down to Court in Litchfield.

His Majesty's Judge of the Superior Court of Litchfield County wasn't in a pleasant mood that morning and he didn't, quite apparently, feel kindly toward light-fingered vagrants. Nathaniel was found guilty and judgement was stern and uncompromising. On the complaint of Isaac Lawrence of Canaan, Nathaniel was fined forty shillings and also ordered to pay court costs and other legal judgement of about ten pounds six. On the additional complaint of Benj. Richmond of Sharon, he was fined forty shillings and the costs were fifteen pounds, twelve shillings and seven pence, "amounting in the whole to thirty one pounds eight shillings and one penny lawful money."

Nathaniel, as aforesaid, being without visible means of support, was ordered up for sale and the sheriff instructed to "dispose of him."

An original hand-written statement, now at the museum, signed by Oliver Wolcott, Sheriff, tells the above story and also of the method of "disposal." The document, incidentally, Mr. Louis B. Wilson tells me, was once the property of the Litchfield County Historical and Antiquarian Society and ownership descended to its successor, the Litchfield Historical Society.

Sheriff Wolcott, later to become nationally famous, did, in his own words "hereby dispose of and sell the said Nathaniel to Ebenezer Leavensworth of Woodbury in said County for the Term of five years next coming to serve to all Intents and Purposes him the said Leavensworth as his master according to what the Law Requires in such Cases."

God Save the King!

. . . . .      **Ninety-Nine Dinners**

Old records at the Historical Society's Museum indicate that bookkeeping, at least for Tavern proprietors, was simpler in the early 1800's than it is this day of bureaucracy and red tape.

When Isaac Baldwin was a popular host in a "House of Public Entertainment," as hotels and taverns were called in 1810, he entertained on occasion the members of the Superior Court. He sometimes let his bill run through the term of the Court before presenting it to the State Treasurer. One of these accounts has been preserved for us and is nicely encased in glass and frame at the Museum.

Isaac's statement is brief, specific and gave no attention to the detailed itemization the State's auditors would demand today. It reads:

The State of Connecticut	
To Isaac Baldwin	
Superior Ct. Feb. Term 1810	
To ninety nine Dinners for the Court	\$49.50
To 21 Bottles of Wine	35.50
To Brandy Sugar &c 17 Days at 4/6	12.75
To pipes & tobacco	0.50
To Segars	0.25
To paper	0.25
	—
	98.75

Mr. Baldwin did not list the number of his guests. He made no embarrassing mention of the judges who consumed the wine and brandy. He didn't tell the State Treasurer which judges preferred cigars and which pipe and tobacco. Although I admire his simple billing method, I shall always be curious about the judge who bought the paper and whether he dutifully wrote to his wife about the long, hard work enforced by this February Term of 1810.

If you are interested in lotteries, there is, not far from the Baldwin statement, another framed exhibit. It is an advertisement of a "Bridge Lottery," organized presumably to pay for the erection of a bridge across the Connecticut. First prize, \$5,000. Total of prizes exceeding \$150,000. Drawing to commence on or before the 14th day of October, 1814, at the State-House in New Haven.

• • • • •      **"Perpetual Peace"**

"It is in substance a project for perpetual Peace . . . and if accepted . . . will extinguish all the operative causes of hostility . . . "

Each succeeding generation gives itself a figurative pat on the back for conceiving a plan which is to bring world-wide peace. Perhaps each generation gets nearer to a successful confederation of nations, and of minds. There have been many attempts: the Pan-Hellenic League, the Grand Alliance, the League of Nations, the United Nations and, now, the North Atlantic Pact.

There was optimism within the Government of the United States that some sort of war-disclaimer could be achieved, when Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, in 1823, was writing the quoted paragraph above to his Charge d' Affairs in Paris. The Paris representative, very incidentally, was Mr. Daniel Sheldon, Jr., of Litchfield, Connecticut, who later died while on duty at the Paris Embassy.

Mr. Adams' letter, in all its beautiful, hand-written prose, has been preserved for us at the Museum. It discusses several matters. To me, the most interesting is Mr. Adams' plan for peace among maritime nations, peace on the sea, at least.

"The occasion has been taken," he wrote "in connection with negotiations upon other subjects, pending between the United States and Great Britain, to propose to that Nation a Convention for regulating neutral and belligerent Rights in time of war, in which all privateering and all warfare against private property upon the Sea is disclaimed and renounced.

"You will take an opportunity to give notice of this circumstance to the French Government, and you will observe that this proposition has been made in the first instance to Great Britain, with a special view to the relations between her and the United States—It is in substance a project for perpetual Peace between them, and if accepted by her will extinguish all the operative causes of hostility between them—But it is not to the consideration of Great Britain alone, that the plan will be offered—It is of the deepest interest to all maritime nations, and the United States will not willingly abandon the hope that it will be adopted by them all—It will, hereafter, be communicated more in detail to the French Government, to the Imperial Government of Russia, and to others . . .

I am, with great Respect, Sir, your very  
humble & obt Sevt.

John Quincy Adams"

### *Doing The Dishes At The Historical Society*

Pottery pigs, porcelain plates, Lowestoft, Wedgewood, Royal Worcester, and the Little Brown Jug—they're all at

the Museum, five hundred and more separate pieces. They came here from the world around, but, with a few exceptions, were at one time or another in daily use by Connecticut families.

In viewing this exhibit you will, because of its size, if for no other reason, stop first at the punch bowl. Three gallons, if it is a pint. It is of Meissen China and it is old. How old I do not know, but it travelled to Charlestown, South Carolina, with its owner, Alexander Gillon, in the 1760's. Gillon was from Rotterdam, Holland. Eventually, the bowl came into the possession of his granddaughter, Mrs. Gideon Hollister, wife of the historian. Mr. Hollister was a member of St. Paul's Lodge, No. 11 F. & A. M., and after his death his widow gave the bowl to the Lodge. It is now on "permanent" loan.

There are two other aids to conviviality conveniently near the punch bowl. One is a decanter owned by Joseph Harris, a "first" settler of Litchfield, who was killed by Indians at, what was later to be known as, Harris Plains. In support of the decanter is a glass bottle which belonged to Joseph's father, Daniel Harris of Middletown.

A number of the dishes, cups, vases, and soup tureen, once were in the home of Miss Sally Pierce, schoolmistress extraordinary. Also gracing the exhibit is a favorite tea-cup and saucer of the "Rose of Sharon", Mrs. Frederick Tallmadge. You will recall that I wrote of the "Rose" and her sister, the "Lily of the Valley", in an earlier chapter.

The pottery at the Museum is from a dozen states and as many countries. There are pitchers, bowls, candle-sticks, vases, plates, flower-pots, and even a pottery necklace.

Among odd pieces of porcelain, glass and other materials is a blue and white shaving cup, Staffordshire, which belonged to Governor Oliver Wolcott; a flower holder of sea anemone; a fish-shaped bottle, marked "Doctor Fish's Bitters"; John Hancock's tankard; a blue and white China pepper box; and a sample of Litchfield clay, fired by the Atlantic Terra Cotta Company.

## *Aboriginal Relics*

The chief claim to fame, white man style, of the Indian inhabitants of Litchfield appears to be that they sold their land to our ancestors. If I may be permitted a play on words, it was the only time they made their mark. They were never numerous in Litchfield County as the area was somewhat of a broad highway for the war parties of the belligerent Mohawks of New York State and their occasional enemies the Pequots of Eastern Connecticut.

They were Yankee Indians, however, and during their stay here through the centuries they did a considerable amount of small manufacture. Some of their crude products are still available for us to see, thanks to the care and thoughtfulness of finders and collectors of aboriginal relics. The most interesting, to me, are those made before the advent of the white man, when the Indian was working mostly in stone and easily mined minerals.

The Museum had a substantial collection of the implements these early craftsmen made for war and the chase. The stone weapons include hatchets, tomahawks, arrowheads, spear heads, and hammer stones. For household and peacetime pursuits there are samples of dishes, pestles, mortars, wedges, chisels and scrapers for cleaning hides.

The Museum has been fortunate in receiving many relics found far from the borders of Litchfield. A sampling of these include:

Stone pipe found in Bethlehem.

Scalping knife from Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Navajo loom from the Grand Canyon.

Obsidian arrowhead from Montana.

Round needle book, worked with colored porcupine quills.

Stone pottery bowl.

Shells used as ornaments.

Birch bark box covered with flowers worked in porcupine quills from Bronxville, N. Y.

Baskets from Alaska.

Pekee bread of the Hopi Indians.

## ***"Of Great Britain, France and Ireland King"***

One of the accomplishments of the Litchfield's Legacy series of articles is an increase in Litchfield's Legacy. For the second time a valuable contribution has come to me to "comment upon", if I will, and then give or offer to the Historical Society. Several weeks ago a photograph of Litchfield in the 60's was contributed by Mr. W. W. Wren of New Haven.

The latest acquisition is a hand engrossed writ issued by Sheriff John Willington, the Younger, Gentleman, in accordance with a court decree concerning ownership of land in the parish of Saint Chad, otherwise Stowe, in the City of Lichfield, England. It was issued in the thirtieth year of the reign of "George the Third by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France and Ireland King—Defender of the Faith."

The handsomely illuminated parchment on which the writ is engrossed is thirty-one inches wide and twenty-seven inches deep. To it is attached a wax seal, round in shape and four and one-fourth inches in diameter. George III sits in state with the British lion at his feet on one side of the seal and on the other is impressed the coat of arms of the monarch.

The document is the gift of Dr. and Mrs. Gert Wallach of Torrington and was one of the possessions in an ancestral home in Austria. They are unable now, because of the disorder in Europe these past few years, to trace the progress of this original writ from Lichfield, England to Austria. Some day the story may become available to us. In the meantime, the daughter of Lichfield will have a memento of her mother city, a relic of a time important in the development of both communities.

### **•   .   .   .   *House and Land Appurtenant***

As time passes, property values in Litchfield have an inclination also to pass to higher levels. A recent formal

revaluation of taxable property in the town in 1949 was the cause of "indignation" on the part of many persons whose real estate was "dearer than emeralds" in the eyes of the re-appraisers.

An old clipping from the Enquirer, preserved in a file at the Museum, gives the valuations in the grand list of 1878. Should you care to compare today and yesterday, here are a few of the 1878 estimates on village property:

NORTH STREET		Geo. H. Baldwin, (four)	5,200
Curtiss & Kirtland,	\$ 3,600	do 188 acres,	4,700
Barzillai Arnts,	4,000	Mrs. Latimer,	1,400
Lucretia Deming	7,000	M. Harrigan,	700
do 160 acres	1,290	Wm. Norton,	1,300
Harriet T. Woodruff,	3,200	Mrs. Homer,	700
H. R. Coit,	3,500	R. C. Crandall,	750
H. B. Graves,	3,000	do 17 acres,	900
James C. Wadsworth,	2,800	Geo. Camp,	500
Clarissa Deming,	3,500	Theodore R. Sedgwick,	850
Charles Jones,	3,500	do 11 acres,	450
F. D. McNeil,	3,500	EAST STREET	
do 3 acres,	400	Mary C. Hickox,	2,500
J. D. Perkins (two)	5,000	Mrs. A. S. Lewis,	3,000
do 30 acres,	1,650	Mrs. G. M. Colvocoresses,	3,500
C. B. Bishop,	3,500	Mrs. Wm. Wheeler,	1,000
do 12 acres,	300	John Phelps,	700
T. R. Trowbridge, Jr.,	4,500	Joseph Slack,	2,500
do 2 acres,	500	do 36 acres,	1,000
Charlotte D. Lord,	2,000	Mrs Langdon,	1,000
do 10 acres,	800	Tomlinson Wells,	1,400
H. W. Buel, 9 houses	17,000	Rev. W. L. Peck,	1,700
do 327 acres,	13,000	G. O. Webster,	3,200
SOUTH STREET		do 20 acres,	1,000
Mansion House,	8,000	T. S. Sedwick,	1,500
J. L. Judd, store,	2,000	do 25 acres,	1,300
J. G. Beckwith, three stores,	3,500	Jerome Bissell,	2,500
do house,	3,500	W. H. Crossman,	5,000
O. S. Seymour, (three)	5,300	Mary A. Lewis and Miss	
do 84 acres,	4,000	Phelps,	3,000
Geo. C. Woodruff, (two)	8,000	WEST STREET	
do 3 acres,	700	D. C. Buckley, warehouse,	2,000
Chas. H. Woodruff,	5,000	Geo. Kenney,	2,800
Mrs. J. H. Hubbard,	4,500	Mrs. John Phelps,	1,100
do 65 acres,	3,000	Mrs. G. Sanford,	2,900
C. B. Andrews,	3,000	do shop,	600
Mrs. G. H. Hollister,	2,000	Mrs. H. P. Trowbridge,	2,900

Stephen Trowbridge,	2,000	Samuel Clock, (two)	1,400
J. L. Judd,	2,300	J. E. Mackintosh, (three)	2,800
J. A. Woodruff, (two)	3,000	T. L. Saltonstall,	1,100
Jackson Tompkins,	1,000	Mary C. Daniels,	600
Adam Watt,	1,500	Thos. Donahue,	900
R. Williams, (two)	1,700	F. M. Hale,	700
W. K. Peck,	700	E. Staples,	1,000
Alva Stone,	600	T. H. Richards (three)	13,700

### . . . *Calcutta, Tahiti, Waterloo and Litchfield*

Probably it is because I am somewhat of a male Alice-in-Wonderland when I am in the Museum that I am repeatedly plagued by inability to find the answers to How and Why. Why, for instance, should a rosette picked up on the battle ground of Waterloo be in this small museum in an inland town in Connecticut? How did it get here?

How did the cotton skirt of an East Indian woman, "curtain-like, to be folded around her and tucked in," and a dress worn by women in the island of Tahiti reach our museum? The record of the travels of these garments—probably as interesting as the cloths themselves—are missing. What world travellers of the 17th and 18th, or 19th centuries brought them back to Litchfield? Did the same man visit Tahiti and Lahore? Perhaps it is better not to have the questions answered. It would be disenchanting to find that the finery of a Polynesian belle had come here as just another piece of trade goods.

My mental meanderings will not lessen your delight in the exhibit of handworked articles at the Museum. You need not be lost in wonder about its travels to enjoy the beauty of a baptismal wrap of Abruzzi lace mounted on blue silk which dates from the 13th Century. Nor need you trouble your head about which Indian (American) made the black cloth slippers, embroidered with colored split porcupine quills and birch bark laid under cloth.

Miss Mary Buel, in 1835, was undoubtedly wondering where she was to get materials when she began a rug made of narrow strips of wool, partly homespun, dyed by her with home-made dyes from beets and other materials and

sewed on heavy home-made linen, the strips sewed so closely to one another as to produce a velvety surface. Whether she wondered or not, she made a rug of lasting beauty and utility. It was in constant use from about 1835 to 1900.

A quilt made by Mrs. Judson Canfield and her daughter, Mrs. F. A. Tallmadge, about 1824, has in it materials that had been travelling. The calico with rosebuds was from dresses of Mrs. Tallmadge and her sisters. The other calico had been curtains in the stateroom of Benjamin Tallmadge, on the frigate Constitution.

Another traveller is a piece of damask imported in 1700 from France for Jabez Bacon, a merchant of Woodbury, for his daughter, Lydia, "on her marriage to Judge Benedict."

There is also a wedding veil made by a young lady from silk raised from silk worms on a plantation in Virginia. The lady reeled off the silk, spun it, and netted the veil. She deserved, and we suspect she had, a lovely wedding.

### • • • • •      *Mull and Crewel*

It has been pointed out that a by-product of this series of articles was a re-created interest in giving appropriate relics to the Litchfield Historical Society. Another by-product of considerably lesser importance is the addition that is being made to the vocabulary of the Young Antiquarian. The other day, for example, when lost in admiration before exhibits of woven and handworked materials at the Museum, I found that the written description frequently used the words "mull" and "crewel".

Any lady handy with a needle probably could have told me the meaning of the words, but I decided to turn first to Mr. Webster. I found they were familiar words to him, and in case you have not used any mull or crewels lately, the dictionary says that mull is a thin, soft cotton dress-goods and crewel is a slackly twisted worsted yarn, used in fancy work.

The exhibit has, among several hundred beautiful pieces, a mull shawl, hand embroidered in colored silks, which belonged to Mary Root of Farmington, who married Luke Lewis of Litchfield, in 1795.

Louisa Lewis (Mrs. Henry Phelps) and Miss Mary Ann Lewis embroidered several India mull skirts, about 1820, which have been saved for us by their descendants.

The word crewel first came to my attention in the inscription for a part of some bed curtains which were spun, woven and embroidered by Polly Cheney, (Mrs. Hepzibah Porter Young), about 1740.

There are far too many articles to list, let alone describe, in the handworked exhibit, but there are two more that give indications of the variety and value of the collection. One is a pocketbook, richly embroidered in colored crewels, which belonged to Captain Salmon Buel. Among the Captain's many abilities was the one to live long in this world; he was more than 100 years old when he died. When he entered the church on his hundredth birthday the congregation rose and sang "Old Hundred". He was a mason by trade and had the doctor but once in his life. That was when he broke his leg and went on horseback "to get it sot."

The other bit of handicraft is a white lace veil, worked by Mary Peck, (Mrs. Edward D. Mansfield), about 1827, and worn at her wedding. She was first a scholar and then a teacher of drawing and painting at Miss Sally Pierce's Female Academy.

### . . . *The Mission Band and Cradle Roll*

I regret that I was not fortunate enough to know the late Miss Anna W. Richards of Litchfield in person. I know her "by her works" and it is of one of them I write today.

Sometime in the latter part of the last century, or early in the present, she began what must have been for her a labor of love, the collection of detailed information about the Litchfield Congregational Church, its ministers, its members and a thousand activities. This material has been

carefully put into a large scrapbook, as nearly as possible in chronological order, thus becoming an invaluable reference.

Since Miss Richards death in 1931, other volunteers have from time to time sent printed records of church activities to the Historical Society and these have been added to her collection. The whole, although there are some gaps, provides a record from the day in 1721 when the first minister, Rev. Timothy Collins, gave his first sermon in Litchfield.

There are lists of members in various years; copies of sermons; accounts of the raising of building and restoration funds; anniversary exercises; installation and memorial services for ministers; annual reports; stories of Harvest Festivals, Gatherings of the Mission Band and the Annual Cradle Roll. Weaved through these are articles on many subjects clipped from local newspapers.

### *Old Lace Without Arsenic*

For several months your correspondent has been sidestepping the lace case, inwardly and guiltily acknowledging neglect of one of the loveliest and most interesting exhibits in the Museum. I quieted the nagging inner voice, usually, by replying: "Who am I, who cannot thread a needle, to discuss, to write about, Valenciennes, Point Gaze and Lierre? Inner voice had to be silent; he did not want this column to be describing duchesse lace as the fancy work worn by a dutchess.

Everything was well and I went about happily copying documents and describing Indian arrowheads until one day the Curator, probably aware of my embarrassment when passing the lace exhibit, inquired whether I knew that Mr. Max Muser was an expert on laces and lace manufacture. I had not, but I was not long in finding out that Mr. Muser had been born into the lace business, that his great uncle had founded the famous house of Muser Brothers in Brus-

sels in 1856, later moving headquarters to New York. His father became head of the firm and Max has bought, sold or manufactured lace in Belgium, France, Switzerland, Germany and America.

Expertly and kindly, Mr. Muser gave me a personally conducted tour and lecture of the lace exhibit. Anything in the following that is factual and correct is Mr. Muser's contribution—the errors are mine.

We began with a lace shawl, once the property of Lucretia Deming Perkins. This beauty is a mixture of applique, Duchesse and Rose Point or, if you will, Point Gaze, attached to artificial, or machine made, net. Almost beside it is some Duchesse lace, once owned by Marie Louise, second wife of Napoleon. It is a gift to the museum from Mrs. William J. Fitzgerald.

Two black lace parasol covers have special interest because such fancy work is no longer made, at least for the market, either by hand or by machine. As a matter of fact, Brussels lace and Rose Point are about the only laces made in any quantity for the market.

The exhibit has a black lace and black ribbed fan attached to a cloth background. This cloth background was common, apparently. I had the privilege of seeing a rare specimen, made entirely of lace, running through split ivory ribs, which is from the private collection of Mr. Muser.

One of the scarves in the collection is of real Valenciennes, which, as of course everybody knows, is a fine bobbin lace formerly made at Valenciennes and now made at Brussels. There are several lace caps, my choice being the one of Lierre lace, crocheted onto net.

A set of bobbins rounds out the exhibit. Bobbins are used in making Duchesse, Chantilly and Valenciennes and, for your further information, the needle is used to make Rose Point, Venice and Alencon.

P. S. I still cannot thread a needle.

. . . . .      ***Unfinished Business***

*These sketches were written to create or renew public interest in the valuable possessions that are a part of Litchfield's legacy.*

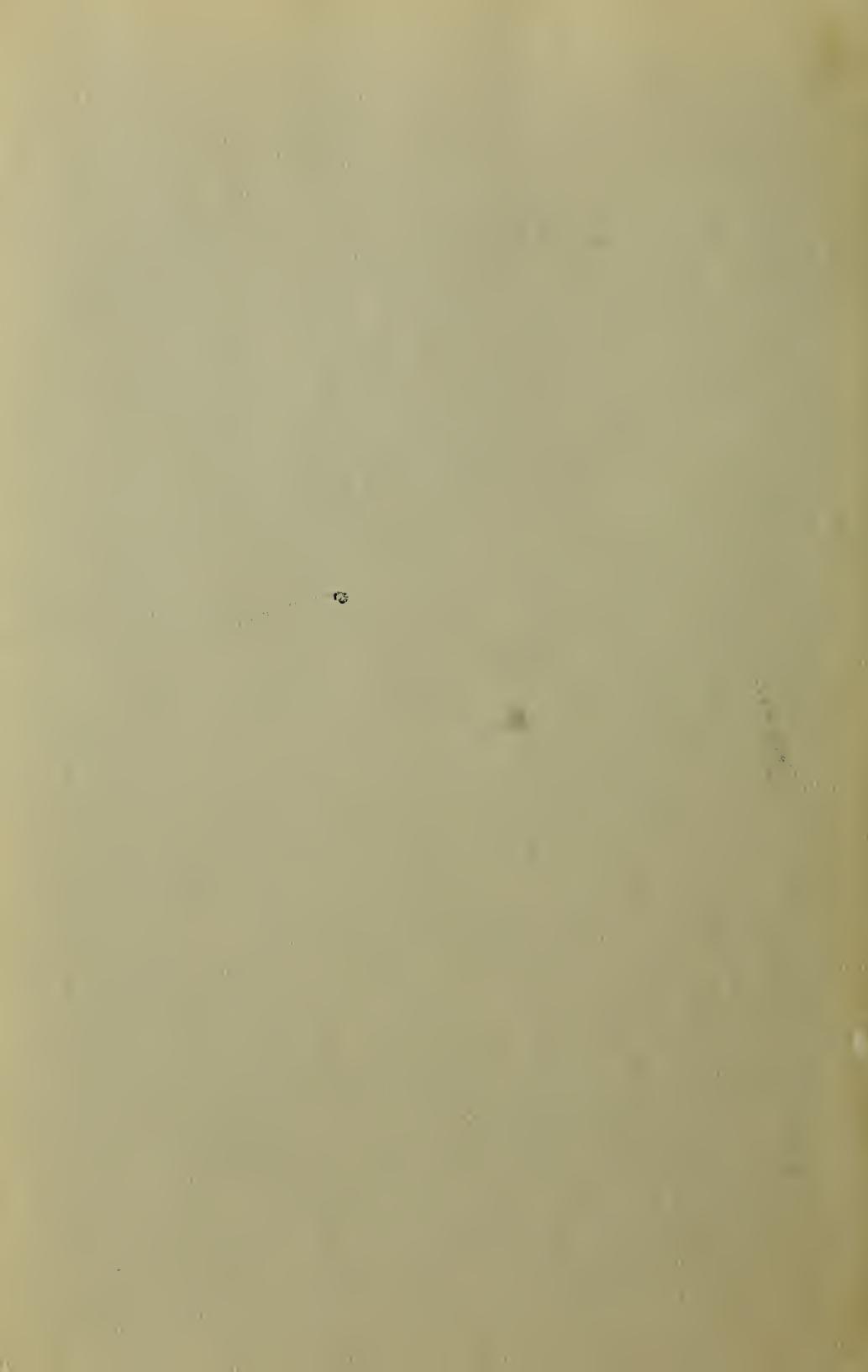
*We doubt that it is possible in one life time for one person to write and print accurate and complete descriptions of the more than 7,000 separate acquisitions of this amazing Museum. Little has been written of the furniture, the clothing, household utensils, medals, engravings, and of a thousand and one miscellaneous articles. Only a sampling of the articles in any exhibit were discussed.*

*It has been good fun preparing the series and we trust they have been of interest. It would have been impossible to write them without the kindly, thorough co-operation which was received from the Curator, Miss Charlotte Wiggin, and other officers of the Historical Society.*



**THE CHAPTERS IN THIS BOOK  
WERE FIRST PUBLISHED IN  
THE LITCHFIELD ENQUIRER**







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